

TAYLOR HARDIN TIMES

NATIONAL HEALTH CENTER WEEK

“COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTERS: LIGHTING THE WAY FOR HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES TODAY AND IN THE FUTURE”

National Health Center Week (August 9 – 15) is an annual celebration with the goal of raising awareness about the mission and accomplishments of America's health centers over the past five decades.

Community Health Centers serve as the beacon of strength, service, and care in their communities. In moments of pain and loss, they offer support and love. In moments of triumph, they offer hope and a vision for the future.

Let's come together this week to celebrate the roles Community Health Centers have played in both our recent moments of loss and triumph. This National Health Center Week honors those front line providers, staff, and beloved patients who lost their lives during the (ongoing) COVID-19 pandemic. From the very beginning of the crisis, Community Health Centers began finding innovative ways to provide preventative and primary care to their patients. During this week of remembrance, light a candle for those community health leaders, patients that we lost. As we commemorate those lives and celebrate the future of Community Health, let's shine a light across the country that will embody the future of primary health care for underserved populations. Shine a light on your Community Health Center and share the value that it brings to everyone who it touches.

We encourage you to consider coordinating your celebrations around the corresponding dates and focus days to showcase the innovative ways that health centers are providing high-quality health care, improving health outcomes, and narrowing health disparities. Your events do not have to coincide exactly with the focus of respective days – much like the NHCW theme, focus days are available to enhance your events and help provide structure at your discretion. Coordinating local efforts around the themes of the focus days helps maximize the national impact of our message.

Mark your calendars for National Health Center Week 2020, August 9 – 15.

AUGUST HOLIDAYS:

- **August 1st:** Universal Shelter Dogs Birthday
- **August 2nd:** National Sister's Day
- **August 4th:** U.S. Coast Guard Birthday
- **August 9th:** National Women's Day
- **August 11th:** National Son and Daughter Day
- **August 12th:** National Youth Day
- **August 13th:** National Lefthander's Day
- **August 14th:** National Pakistan Day
- **August 15th:** Indian Independence Day
- **August 19th:** Islamic New Year
- **August 20th:** National Radio Day
- **August 21st:** National Senior Citizens Day
- **August 22nd:** Onam
- **August 26th:** Women's Equality Day
- **August 28th:** Ashura
- **August 31st:** National Heroes' Day





Brandon Heath, Advocate

This month, I am focusing on patients' right to legal competency. Regardless of the level of disability, a patient is legally competent unless determined otherwise by a judge. Just because a person has been committed to a psychiatric hospital for treatment does not mean the person is incapable of

making decisions for themselves, managing their own affairs, and exercising all other rights guaranteed to other persons in society. Unless determined by a court of law that the patient is incapable, the patient has the right to be treated as a legally competent individual. Additionally, patients at Taylor Hardin Secure Medical Facility (THSMF) have the right to vote by absentee ballot in state, local, and federal elections unless they have previously been convicted of a felony or declared legally incompetent by the court.

Should a court conclude that a person is legally incompetent, a legal guardian would be appointed to oversee the individual's affairs. This is typically a family member. Families need to understand that once minors turn 18 parental rights cease, and guardianship would need to be sought. The patient population at THSMF is only made up of adults. Therefore, a patient's parent is not considered a legal guardian unless assigned as such by the court.

Lastly, it is important to note that some patients are admitted to THSMF after being found "incompetent to stand trial" for felony offenses to which they have been charged. Incompetency to stand trial is a different concept and is not included in the patient's right to legal competency as described above.

COVID-19 AND PATIENT CARE

All visitation to the Alabama Department of Mental Health treatment facilities will continue to be suspended to protect our patients from COVID-19. You may continue to maintain contact with your family member through telephone and mail communications until this crisis has subsided. You will be kept informed of your family member's status and you may contact your relative's social worker if you have additional questions related to his status as consent allows.

All primary next-of-kin will be notified when visitation is able to be resumed. Your assistance with communicating this information to other family members/next-of-kin who may be approved for visitation would be much appreciated.

We want to assure our patients' families that our patient's care has not been disrupted during this time and they are continuing to receive services as they were prior to COVID-19.

WE WANT TO ANSWER YOUR QUESTIONS!

Have a question or comment about the newsletter? Contact Chloe Tilley by phone at 205-462-4543 or by email at chloe.tilley@hardin.mh.alabama.gov. You can also mail in your questions to 1301 Jack Warner Parkway NE, Tuscaloosa, Alabama 35404.